

3
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KGB defector barred from... entering U.S.

By George Archibald
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A former Soviet KGB agent who defected to Canada more than a decade ago with the help of the CIA and State Department was barred this month from entering the United States because he once was a member of the Communist Party.

Tomas D. Shuman, formerly a top propaganda officer for the Soviet Novosti Press Agency in India, was turned away by U.S. border authorities on Oct. 4 as he attempted to cross from Quebec to Champlain, N.Y., sources reported.

Mr. Shuman — an identity given to him by the CIA along with new birth documents at the time of his defection in 1970 — was returning to the United States for one of his frequent lecture tours.

Mr. Shuman, a Canadian citizen since 1975, said in an interview that the action had forced him to cancel scheduled speeches and radio-television appearances in Florida and California, including a Daughters of the American Revolution meeting in Fresno.

Nancy Greene, wife of actor Lorne Greene, had asked Mr. Shuman to participate in a civil defense conference Nov. 4-5 in Los Angeles. He said he may be unable to go because of the U.S. action. The purpose of the conference is to expose Soviet orchestration of the "nuclear winter" doomsday scenario being promoted by environmentalists and peace activists, an organizer said.

"I'm just sitting here in Montreal until they [U.S. officials] get things straightened out," Mr. Shuman said. "They told me I would have to get a waiver from the U.S. consulate before I could enter the country, which they said could take three months or more."

"They saw my passport said I was born in [the] U.S.S.R.," he said. "They asked me if I had ever been [a] member of the Communist Party. 'Of course,' I said. Maybe I tell them too much, I don't know. They said I

would have to get [a] waiver to get in. I have made dozens of such trips to the U.S. and this is the first time this has ever happened," he said.

Mr. Shuman is the son of Col. Alexander I. Bezmenov, former chief inspector of the Soviet army during the Khrushchev era. He graduated from the Oriental Studies Institute in Moscow and was an editor for the Novosti Press Agency — a propaganda arm of the Soviet KGB — in New Delhi for eight years before he defected to Canada.

For the past six years he has worked as a free-lance writer for Panorama News, a Russian Jewish newspaper in Los Angeles. Mr. Shuman said he earns much of his living by speaking to American audiences about Soviet espionage, subversion and disinformation activities. A Ukrainian, he also is active in the cause of Jewish emigres.

"Alexander Polovets, my boss at Panorama, wanted me to keep my Canadian passport to travel," he explained. "The U.S. government granted me a work permit in September, and I applied for my [permanent resident] green card two weeks ago."

John Damone, Immigration and Naturalization Service chief at Champlain, N.Y., said he did not recall the border incident involving Mr. Shuman. He referred The Washington Times to INS district headquarters in Buffalo.

Winston Barrus, an INS official in Buffalo, said the INS "would be required to refuse admission" to foreign communists or former communists until they could demonstrate their desirability for entry into the country.

"He's going to have to face it," Mr. Barrus said. "He could obtain defector status by showing five years of active opposition to the communist system at the same level as when he was part of the system. Or he can get a waiver of inadmissibility, which is a one-time thing that would have to be done on a continuing basis."